

THE TOP OF THE LADDER

NO. 1755

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might
be filled with all the fullness of God.”
Ephesians 3:19.*

THIS is a part of Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers. It is the closing clause and consummation of it. It mentions the grandest gift for which he prayed. His prayer was like that ladder which Jacob saw, the top of which reached to heaven and God, and the apostle at the foot of it was not asleep, but looking up with eager eyes, and marking each rising rung of light. Be it ours by sweet experience to ascend that staircase of light. May the Holy Spirit reveal it to us even now!

You must begin to read at the 14th verse. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, *that*”—this is one rung of the ladder. “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, *that*”—here comes the second rung, one step helps you to reach the next, and you are strengthened that you may rise higher and enjoy a further privilege. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, *that*”—this is the third rung. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may help you at once take a firm footing upon it! “That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.” Surely we are at the top of the ladder now, are we not? What a height! How glorious is the view! How solid the standing! How exhilarating the sense of communion with all saints and with the Lord of saints! Yet this is not the top of it. Here is another step—“*that* you might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

You see that the prayer begins with the gracious petition that we may be *strengthened*—“strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, according to the riches of His glory.” The objective is that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Before the Lord can dwell in us, we must be strengthened—mentally and spiritually strengthened. To entertain the high and holy One—to receive into our soul the indwelling Christ—it is necessary that the temple be strengthened, that there be more power put into every pillar and into every stone of the edifice. It is taken for granted that we have already been washed and cleansed, and so made fit for Christ to come and dwell within us. But we also need to be strengthened, for, unless we become stronger in all spiritual life, how is Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith? Unless we become stronger in love, and in all the graces of the Spirit, how can we worthily entertain such a guest as the Lord Jesus? Yes, and we even need that our spiritual perception should be strengthened, that we may be able to know Him when He does come and dwell in us. We need that our spirit should be elevated and lifted into a higher condition than as yet it has known, in order that we may be on a platform where we can have communion with Christ, and may, by a heavenly enlargement of mind and heart, be made able to the fullest to entertain the Lord of glory. We must be strengthened into stability of mind that so Christ may dwell, abide, reside in our hearts by faith. Oh, brethren, everything has to be done for us, for even when we are made clean enough for Christ to enter us, we are not strong enough. Even when the Lord has taken away the defilement, so that no longer “sin lies at the door” to shut Him out, yet even then we are too feeble to entertain so great a guest. We should be like Peter, who, when Christ came into his boat and filled it with fish, was too feeble to receive Him, and therefore cried out in an agony of weakness, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” “Oh,” says one, “I would never say that.” I do not know, brother. If the Lord were to favor you with such divine manifestations as He has given to the stronger saints, you might be overcome, and swoon with in-

ward faintness, almost desiring that Christ would not draw so near to you. If the Lord should appear to you in His glory, you would be afraid, and like John in the Apocalypse, fall at His feet as dead. You need to be strengthened, for how else could you endure the vision of His splendor, the divine excitement of His infinite love? Paul, therefore, begins his requests for the Ephesians with a prayer for more strength for their inner man. Let us pray it tonight—"O Holy Spirit, strengthen my feeble mind, that I may be able to receive more of my Lord. Give me more capacity, give me a clearer perception, give me a better memory, give me an intense affection, and give me a larger faith." This is the first prayer—that you may be strengthened according to the riches of His glory, with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Be eager for this; plead now with all your hearts for me and for yourselves, that we may all be strengthened by the power of the Spirit of our God.

Now, having stood on the first step of the ladder, Paul goes on to pray that, when we are strengthened, we may be *inhabited*, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. When the house is ready to receive Him, and strong enough for such a wondrous inhabitant, may Jesus come, not to look about Him as He did when He went into the temple—for we read that He looked round about Him with indignation, and did not remain there—but may He come on purpose to abide with us, not to tarry for a night and give us some transient visits of His love, sweet as that would be, but "that Christ may *dwell* in our hearts by faith." This will make you living temples for the indwelling Lord. Oh, but this is a great prayer, and when you are strengthened to receive so sacred a gift, may the Lord fulfill it to you till your communion with Christ shall be constant all the while you are awake, and when you awake in the night may you still be with Him, being even now, "forever with the Lord." I pray that you may no longer envy the disciples in their walk to Emmaus, as though they were the most privileged of all mankind because they had one walk with Jesus, but may your fellowship be such that you entertain the Savior day and night—going, may you take Him where you go, and staying, find Him where you stay. May you have His perpetual, unclouded presence with you, being strengthened up to that mark, for it is not every man that is capable of it. Oh, brethren, you must aspire to the power of grace at its fullest, being strengthened by the Spirit of God until Christ shall reside in your hearts by faith, that you may always see Him within you, having so clear a view of what Jesus is, and what He has done, that you may never again be vexed with doubts concerning Him or His word. May you have such familiar communion with Him that you may believe Him implicitly, and never dream of distrusting Him. As a child lies on its mother's bosom, so may you rest upon the love of Christ, leaning all your weight upon Him. May you never have to inquire for your Well-beloved, but know that He abides within you, as surely as your heart remains in living energy within your body. Be not afraid to ask, and seek, and believe for this, the ladder is meant to be climbed, this experience is attainable, Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. This second step of the ladder is worth reaching. Rise to it, you struggling believers! The Lord bring us all to it by the Holy Spirit!

And when we climb thus far, what next? This third step is a broad one, and it has three parts to it. Its first part is *establishment*—"That you, being rooted and grounded in love." When you are strengthened and when Jesus dwells in your heart, then you are no longer "carried about with every wind of doctrine," but you are rooted, like a cedar in Lebanon which receives but fears not the stormy wind. You are no longer upset by doubts and fears, as a bowing wall is thrown over by a breeze, for you are grounded like a well-built house, settled on its rocky foundation. Your wall has made its last settlement, and has settled down upon the eternal foundation which can never be removed, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." No man attains to this rooted and grounded state unless Christ dwells in his heart. The indwelling is necessary to the settlement of the house, but he that has Jesus dwelling in him laughs to scorn the whimsies and fancies which men call philosophies. He knows nothing about "advanced thought," for by the grace of God, he has advanced as far as he needs to advance, since he has come to live in Christ and Christ has come to live in him. What is there beyond this as to firmness of basis and foundation? If there is anything beyond this, we do not know it, nor want to know it. We are perfectly content and satisfied to remain with the love of Christ abiding in our souls—"that Christ may dwell in our hearts, that we may be rooted and grounded in love." For oh! When the heart gets grounded in love—when it loves Christ and feels the love of Christ shed abroad in it by the Holy Spirit, it says, "To where do you invite me? To what fair havens could I sail? With what do you tempt me? What can be

sweeter under heaven or in heaven than that which I now enjoy, namely, the love of an indwelling Christ? Oh, evil sirens, you sing to me in vain! You might sooner tempt the angels in heaven to descend to hell than persuade my spirit to leave my Beloved who dwells in me and lives in me, and who has grounded and settled me in a deep sense of His eternal love.”

Side by side with this very blessed establishment in the faith, for which I would bow my knee as Paul did for the Ephesians, that you may all have it, comes a *comprehension* of divine love. How anxiously do I desire your firm settlement in the truth, for this is an age which needs rooted and grounded saints, this is a time when men need to be confirmed in the present truth and to hold it as with an iron hand. Side by side with that, however, we would have you receive this further blessing, namely, a comprehension of the love of Christ, “That you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” that you may have no crude idea, but a clear and definite understanding of what the love of Christ is to you. As a mathematician makes calculations and arrives at clear ideas, as a mechanic cubes a quantity and takes its length, and depth, and height, so may the Lord Jesus Christ’s love be to you no more an airy dream, but a substantial fact, about which you know distinctly, being taught of the living God by the Holy Spirit. You know that Christ’s love is an eternal love, without beginning, an everlasting love, without end, a love that knows no boundary, a love that never lessens and cannot be increased, a love that burns freely in His heart towards you as an unworthy, undeserving sinner, a love which led Him to live for you in human nature, and to die for you in His own body on the cross, a love which made Him stand sponsor, surety and substitute for you, and led Him to bear your load of sin, and die while doing so, and bury that sin of yours in a sepulcher out of which it never shall rise. You know that it is a love which made Him rise again and mount the heavens and sit at the right hand of God, still doing all for you—living, that you may live, pleading, that you may be preserved, preparing heaven, that you may come there to dwell with Him, and intending to come by-and-by that He may receive you to Himself, that where He is, there you may also be. Oh, beloved, this is a delightful thing, first to be strengthened, then to have Christ dwelling in you, and then to begin to know the measure of His immeasurable love. This is to be taught of God, when you are able to speak of height, depth, length, breadth, and so see the Savior’s love to be a tangible, real, practical, efficient thing. How blessed to comprehend that divine love which, after all, is incomprehensible! I know that some of you who have been lately converted think that you know all about it, but you do not, for I tell you freely that some of us who have now known the Lord for a third of a century must still confess that we have only coasted along the shore of this great world of love, while into the center of the bright continent we have never yet been able to penetrate. I could introduce you to friends who have been 50 years in Christ and though they hold a constant jubilee in the sense of His love, yet they will tell you that they are only scholars on the lowest form, beginning to spell out the alphabet of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. You do not know what lies before you, young saints, but press on, ask the Lord to make you stronger, and you shall then entertain your Lord as a perpetual guest within your bosom. And you shall come to know what fathers in the church have loved to learn, the heights and depths of unsearchable love. Be this our prayer at this moment—

*“Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell
By faith and love in every breast!
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel
The joys that cannot be expressed!
Come fill our hearts with inward strength
Make our enlarged souls possess
And learn the height, and breadth, and length,
Of your immeasurable grace!”*

Do not overlook the third part of this subject, which is “that you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge”—that you may have *acquaintance* with that love which can never be fully known. This is the subject upon which I would briefly speak, taking the whole verse as a step that leads to another step. “That you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, *that*”—and now we come to the top step of all—“that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Here are four things to talk about—to *know the love of Christ*, secondly, *to know it so as to be filled with all the fullness of God*, thirdly, *to be filled with the fullness of God*, and then, fourthly, *being full, what then?* Does not that mean that when we are full we shall overflow to the glory of Him who filled us? God grant that we may! May the fullness of Jesus be glorified by our holy and useful outpourings!

I. First, then, TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Observe that Paul was not praying for people who did not know the love of Christ in the ordinary meaning of the term. They did know it, they had heard all about it from Paul. They had read about it in his epistles and in other gracious records. They knew the whole story of the love of Christ through apostolic teaching. Yes, and they knew it by faith, too. They had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of their souls, so that in the first verse of this epistle he calls them, “saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.”

What does he mean by his prayer that they might know the love of Christ? He intended another kind of knowledge. I know very many people, that is to say, I have read about them. I have heard of them. I have seen them in the streets and they touch their hats to me, and I do the same to them. And thus I know them. This is a slender form of knowledge, yet I fear it is the kind of knowledge which most men have of Christ. They have seen Him. They have looked to Him, and blessed be His name, there is life in a look, but they have gone no further. Even such a knowledge as that which comes by trembling faith is a knowledge that saves. But I will tell you the people I know best. They live with me in my own house. I see them every day, I am on the most familiar terms with them, and this is the knowledge here intended. Read our text again. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” and then—“that you may know the love of Christ.” Is not this the best way of knowing it? Jesus resides in your heart, which is the center of *your* love, and then you know *His* love. He teaches you to love Him, and as you learn the sweet lesson, you begin to know how Jesus loves you. You come to know Him by personal acquaintance, by having Christ dwelling in you so that you see Him, hear Him, feel His touch and enjoy His blessed company. This kind of knowledge is the most precious of all knowledge, whatever the subject may be.

You see the *method* of this knowledge, the way in which it comes to us. It is a sure and efficient way, for by having Jesus dwell in us, and by becoming rooted, and grounded in love to Him, we come to know Him as we can never know Him by being taught by our fellow men, or by all the reading or study in the world. This is the highest style of the science of Christ Crucified, for this comes of personal proof and experiential test, and therefore it is not to be taken from us, but is woven into our consciousness. We have been taught by certain modern philosophers that we do not *know* anything. I fancy our friends are not far off the mark if they only speak for themselves, but I object to their representing *us*. They tell us that we only know that our senses have been operated upon, and perhaps we may know that certain things do thus operate, but we can hardly be sure of that. One of these philosophers kindly says that religion is a matter of belief, not of knowledge. This is in opposition to all the teaching of Scripture. Take your pencil and read through all the Epistles of John, and mark the word “know.” It is repeated continually. In fact, it is the key word of the apostle’s letter. He writes perpetually, “We know; we know; we know; we know.” Truly, brethren, we *know* the love of Christ. When Jesus dwells in us, we do not merely believe in His love as a report, but we enjoy it as a fact. We have made its acquaintance, we have tasted, we have handled, we have experienced this heavenly gift; what a favor! To know the love of Christ! Do not forget that this only comes of Christ’s dwelling in us, and of our being rooted and grounded in love to Him.

“We cannot be certain of anything,” someone says. Well, perhaps *you* cannot. But the man who has Christ dwelling in him says, “There is one thing I am certain of, and that is the love of Christ to me. I am assured of the loveliness of His character and the affection of His heart. I perceive that He Himself is love and I am equally clear, since He has come to live with me, that He loves *me*, for He would not have lived in my heart at all if He had not loved me. He would not cheer and encourage me. He would not rebuke and chasten me, as He does, if He did not love me. He gives me every proof of His love, and therefore I am sure of it. I will have no question raised or if *you* raise it, you will kindly understand that I do not raise it, for I have come to this, I know the love of Christ.”

What a blessed knowledge this is! Do they talk of science? No science can rival the science of Christ Crucified! Knowledge? No knowledge can compare with the knowledge of the love that passes

knowledge. How sweet it is to know love! Who needs a better subject to exercise his mind upon? And how precious is the love of Christ! The sweetest of all the sweets that life can yield—the source of love, the mirror of love, the model of love, the love which surpasses all love, as the knowledge of it surpasses all knowledge. Who would not be a scholar when the book he reads in is the heart of Christ? Who would not be a student when the science is Christ Crucified, the lesson book Christ manifested, the tutor Christ glorified, and the prize Christ enthroned in the heart? Jesus is most dear from every point of view, but how charming is it to see Him in the light of love, so as “to know the love of Christ”!

You see, then, *the way in which we come by our knowledge*, and *the certainty* there is in it, and *the sweetness* of the subject. I shall have to show you, as we go on, *the efficacy* of this knowledge, for when we know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, it follows before long that we come to be *filled* with all the fullness of God. Here is a sweet perfume brought into a man’s house. For substance it seems to be a little thing, it can lie on his finger. Wait a few minutes and it has actually filled the room. Everyone exclaims, “What sweetness!” The fragrance perfumes the entire chamber. They open the door, the delicious scent is in the passage, it has gone upstairs into every bedroom, till the fragrance is diffused through the entire house, and if you open a window it invades the street and charms the passersby. If the love of Christ is really known in the soul, it is like a precious box of rarest aromatics, it diffuses itself till it fills our entire being. I do not wonder to find my text saying, “And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God,” for the love of the Lord Jesus is the most filling thing in existence. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him, for of His fullness have all you received, and grace for grace, how can we be otherwise than filled?

II. We must dwell a minute on that rung of the ladder to which we have ascended—TO KNOW SO AS TO BE FILLED.

It is not every kind of knowledge that will fill a man. Many forms of knowledge make a man emptier than he was before. The knowledge of earthly luxuries tends to make a man hunger for them, and so a new vacuum is created in his mind. When he perceives that there is this or that delight to be had, then he becomes discontented till he gets it, and so he is emptier than he was before. Much of human knowledge is described by the apostle thus, “Knowledge puffs up; but love builds up.” Sometimes the more men know the greater fools they become, for knowledge is not wisdom, though wisdom cannot be without knowledge. Knowledge in the hands of a fool is but a means of publishing his folly. Wisdom is the flower which grows out of knowledge, but all knowledge does not bear that flower, much of it is barren. Brethren, if you get knowledge of Christ’s love, it is a filling knowledge, for it contents the soul. When a man knows the love of Christ to him, every part of his being is satisfied. We are made up, as it were, of a number of horseleeches, every one of which cries, “Give. Give.” Here is the heart craving for something to love. Oh, but when you love Christ, you have a heart’s love that will satisfy you for all time! Where can such sweetness be? Your heart shall never go hungering again. His charms shall hold you fast. There is the intellect, what a horseleech it is! It is always craving for more—more certainty, more novelty, more wonder. But when the intellect comes to know Christ, it acknowledges that in Him dwells all wisdom. To know the Eternal Son is to know the Father, and this is a knowledge which rests the understanding and fills up the mind. Imagination itself is content with Jesus. Hope cannot conceive anything more lovely, she gives up all attempts to paint a fairer than He, and she cries, “Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend. O, you daughters of Jerusalem!” No power or passion that is vital to our manhood is discontented with the Lord Jesus Christ. Before conversion we gad abroad, and go to this house and to that to pick up scanty meals. But when Christ comes home to dwell with us we sup with Him, and no more go out, since there is nowhere to be found anything that is as good as He, much less anything that can be better than He. When the love of Christ enters the heart, it is swiftly filled with a perfect satisfaction. A certain divine, not a thousand miles away, who has no very great love for the gospel, says that he can influence and enlighten most people except those who hold the views of a certain “notorious individual.” That epithet I take to myself. He adds, “When once they receive his doctrinal teaching there is no stirring them an inch.” Blessed be God for that. I scarcely hoped that the work was so well done, and I am glad of the worthy gentleman’s certificate. So it is, when once

you cast anchor in the port of Christ's love, you wish for no more voyages. You will not change when you feel that it is well with your soul. You are convinced that there is no better article in the market than that which your soul has learned to feed upon, and so you are not inclined to go further and fare worse.

Again, when the soul comes to enjoy Christ, it is filled in a most emphatic sense. It is not merely satisfied, but overjoyed. One said to me the other day, "I am sure that you have a contented heart." "Well," I replied, "if I were pinched with poverty you might talk of my contentment, but God blesses me so richly that I have passed beyond mere contentment, I have all things and abound. I feel as if I can bless God all day long." Christ's people are not merely safe and contented, they are filled. And well they may be, for there is enough in Christ for millions, and yet He is altogether ours. He has given Himself to us as a glorious whole. A little patrimony may make a man contented, but what shall we say when our heritage is Christ Himself? Contented? Why, our heart leaps as we survey our infinite portion—

***"In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am
And my heart does dance at the sound of His name."***

When you live in the full enjoyment of the Lord's presence and abide under a sense of His love, you feel happier than tongue can tell. Your heart is too full to hold, it is like a vessel needing vent, it possesses a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Once more, when the love of Christ comes to work upon the soul, when it brings with it all its choice treasures, then the mind of the believer is filled with the fullness of God. What is it that the love of Christ gives to the objects of it? Let me ask another question. What is it which is worth having that it does *not* give? He gives us light for our darkness, eyes for our blindness, food for our hunger, cleansing for our defilement, garments for our nakedness, healing for our sickness. He gives us strength for our weakness, joy for our sorrow, comfort for our distress, deliverance for our peril, and triumph for our conflict. When Jesus comes to dwell in the heart, He brings with Him such furniture, such provision, that our entire nature is equipped, furnished, provided for, in a word, "filled with all the fullness of God." Christ does not long dwell in an unfurnished house. Oh, you that have a poor, poverty-stricken religion of which you have to say, like the elder brother in the parable, "These many years did I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends," I beseech you, say so no more. Come, brother, alter that tune, and hear what the great Father says, "Son, you are always with Me, and all that I have is yours." If Christ dwells in your heart, His Father is your Father, His God is your God, His heaven is your heaven, yes, and His throne shall be your throne, for He will make you to sit where He sits at the right hand of God in glory. Oh, the blessedness of knowing the love of Christ! It fills the spirit to the fullest.

III. In a sentence or two I will pass over the third point, namely, WHAT IT IS TO BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD.

Does it not mean that self is banished, for if the fullness of God has filled you, where is room for self? Does it not mean that the soul is perfectly charmed with all that God does for it, "Filled with all the fullness of God"? Does it not mean that every power of the entire nature is solaced and satisfied? Does it not mean that the whole man is occupied and inhabited by God—that the whole nature becomes permeated with grace, saturated with love, satisfied with favor, and full of the goodness of the Lord? I will not talk more of it at this time. I hope that you will know by experience what that fullness means, if you do not know it already. May the Holy Spirit give you this glad experience!

IV. I want to come to the practical point that WHEREVER CHRIST DWELLS IN THE HEART BY FAITH WE RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF GOD INTO OUR SPIRIT, WITH THE DESIGN THAT WE MAY OVERFLOW.

Brothers, sisters, I dare say you know what it is to be empty. Have you ever tried to pray when you are empty? Yes and the result is a very empty prayer. "Out of nothing comes nothing." And when there is no prayer in you, and you pray, why, it is no prayer at all. You try to praise, but if there is no praise in you, your attempted hallelujahs languish and expire. If true praise comes forth from you, it must first have been within you. But do you know what it is to pray when you are full of prayer? When the Lord has filled you with hunger, and thirst, and desires, and hopes, and expectations, what an overflowing of prayer is with you! When the season of prayer is over, and you go down to business, you cry, "Alas, I

never knew a quarter of an hour fly so quickly as this has done! How refreshed I am! I made no effort to pray, but I poured out my soul like water before the Lord.” Yes, because you have been filled with all the fullness of God, therefore you have prayed readily and with fullness. In singing, you have felt the same plenitude of devotion. Sometimes when you have been praising the Lord, you have wished that you had all men’s tongues in your mouth, and that you had all the songs of birds at your command, and all the music of the spheres. You have desired to make the stars your keyboard, to play upon them a glorious *Te Deum*, and yet you would not even then have praised your God as your heart desired. When you are full of praise, then you praise, indeed. It is a blessed thing for our heart to get full towards God, for then we worship Him with a full soul. It may be only full of regrets, repentances, and desires, but yet if it is full, it is a blessed fullness. Even if you are only full of groans, and cries, and entreaties, it is well. When God dwells in you by the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of supplication and devotion, then you live towards God with vigorous life.

And dear brethren, when you are all full of divine grace, you are filled for all the circumstances of life. You have lately buried a greatly beloved one. The news came upon you all of a sudden, but you were not afraid of evil tidings. Why, because your heart was “fixed, trusting in the Lord.” When the sad bereavement came, it did not overwhelm you, at another time it might have done so, but the Lord was pleased to fill you with His presence that you were quite prepared for the trouble. Tomorrow morning if you go into the world filled with the fullness of God, afflictions may come in business, perhaps an extra heavy account will be sent in, and you will be perplexed as to how to meet it, but you will not mind. You will be ready for the difficulty because the fullness of God will ballast you and save you from the rough winds. Perhaps tomorrow you will meet with a great success, and if you are not full of grace you will grow proud and lifted up, but if you are filled with all the fullness of God, if the Lord should make you as rich as Solomon, you would not grow worldly. If you are filled with all the fullness of God, you are as ready for prosperity as you are for adversity, and whatever happens to you in the future you will be prepared for it. If you are called upon to confess His name, if you are filled with all the fullness of God, courage will be yours, and if you are called to endure great suffering, patience will be ready, for the God of patience will grant you strength equal to your need. If a knotty problem poses you, and you are filled with God’s wisdom, you will work it out. If you go forth filled with God, you are provided for every emergency. Come slander or prosperity, whatever shape the temptation may assume, if the love of Christ has filled you with the fullness of God, you are ready for it. Look how prepared you will be to meet your brethren and benefit them. Suppose you should meet one in a little gathering of believers, and they should ask you to speak a word, if you are full, your speech will be worth hearing, but if you are empty, your communications will be also empty. Sometimes when we preach we are conscious of unfitness for the work because our soul is poverty-stricken. There cannot be much in our mouths if there is little in our hearts. Out of an empty sack you cannot shake a bushel of wheat, even if you shake it very hard. I have heard a brother pray a wearisome while, and I believe he was long because he had nothing to say. A horse can run many miles if he has nothing to carry. Long prayers often mean wind and emptiness. If you are full with a divine fullness, your lips scatter gems more precious than pearls and diamonds. Filled with all the fullness of God your paths, like God’s paths, drop fatness. Do you not know Christian men of that sort? They are millionaire Christians who make others rich. I know saints whom I rejoice to visit because I always learn from them. It is a privilege to be in the company of full saints, just as it is a misery to hear the clatter of empty professors. It is said that we English people feel delighted if we sit by the side of a lord, this I know, that if I get into the company of one of God’s aristocracy, and have a quarter of an hour’s talk with him, and a little prayer as well, I feel quite lifted up. My heart is glad within me when I see the grace of God abundant in a brother or sister. I want you, brethren, to be full of sympathy, full of pity, full of mercy, full of wisdom, and when your brethren hear you speak, they will be as men who have found running springs and filled up their vessels.

Lastly, if the love of Jesus Christ is in us so that we are filled with all the fullness of God, how ready we shall be to meet common folk that are not the Lord’s people as yet! We shall have a word on wheels for all who cross our path. You find it difficult to get the right words at the right time when you are talking to seekers. Just so, brothers and sisters, but may not that be, because you are not full up to the brim?

You are nearly empty, and it takes you a long time to turn your tub up and pour out the little drop which hangs at the bottom. If you were full up to the brim, you would run over on all sides, and all around you there would be holy moisture. If you are so full of spiritual life that you cannot help running over, you will, by the Holy Spirit's power, pour out the right expressions when they are needed, and thirsty souls will receive of the living water.

If we are quite full, we may move about among ungodly men, and our presence will be a benediction to them. I read the other day of one who heard a man swear and tell a lie at the same time. He did not say anything, but the swearer was aware that the listener was aware of his falsehood. The reprover fixed his eye on the liar, and was silent. That glance went to the other's heart, for it said more than a dozen hard names. What the reprover did not say had more power than what he might have said. Be zealous for the Lord, and He will tell you what to do, and guide you as how to do it, if you are only full of His life.

"But I do not know how to speak," says one. Just so, you know that you have only a little living water at the bottom of your barrel, and you do not know how to get it out. "Oh, but I feel such a difficulty in speaking." If there is only a little in the tub, the difficulty is to get it out, but if you are full, that difficulty will vanish.

If the Lord has brought us to His fullness, it is a very high state to be in. Look at our blessed Master. Wherever He was, and whatever happened, and wherever He went, He did the right thing, there and then, and said the best thing that could be said, because the Holy Spirit rested upon Him without measure. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would fill us also according to our capacity! If the water carts go along the road in dusty weather with nothing in them, they will not stop the dust, and if you Christians go about the world empty, you will not stop the dust of sin which blinds and defiles society. If you go to a fountain and find no water flowing, that fountain mocks your thirst, it is worse than useless. Therefore, do not forget that if you ever become empty of grace, you mock those who look to you. Blessed is he of whom it is written, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This spoke Christ of the Spirit of God dwelling in men. God grant that you and I may understand His meaning!

If anybody is saying, "This is out of my line; I have not come as far as this." I know it is so. I have not been talking to you. Yet I will not be altogether silent to you. Look to Jesus Christ at once, and you shall be saved. Trust Him, trust Him wholly. By faith you will begin to live. After you begin to live, you will be strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord. After you are strengthened Christ will dwell in your heart. After Christ has dwelt in your heart, you shall know the love that passes knowledge, and after you know the love that passes knowledge, you shall be filled with all the fullness of God. Do not begin at the end, but take things according to God's order. A man who wishes to climb a ladder does not expect to put his foot upon the top rung at the first step, he ascends by degrees. There is your first rung—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Take that first step at once. May the Lord help you! Beginning with faith in Jesus, you shall persevere, and ascend till you reach the top of the ladder. The Lord be with you and in you to the fullest! Amen and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—EPHESIANS 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—769, 457, 463.**

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